IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claim 8, as shown below in the detailed listing of all claims which are, or were, in the application:

Claims 1-7 (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) A composition for controlled release of a biologically active agent from a carrier, wherein the biologically active agent is heparin or a related biologically active acidic polysaccharide, and wherein the carrier is a sol-gel derived silica xerogel, the xerogel is derived from a tetraalkoxysilane and ~~that~~ part of the tetraalkoxysilane is replaced by an organomodified alkoxysilane, wherein said composition is biodegradable.

9. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 8, wherein said tetraalkoxysilane is tetraethoxysilane (TEOS), and said organomodified alkoxysilane is an alkylsubstituted alkoxysilane.

10. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 9, wherein said alkylsubstituted alkoxysilane is a member selected from the group consisting of methyltriethoxysilane (METES), dimethyldiethoxysilane (DMDES) and ethyltriethoxysilane (ETES).

11. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 8, wherein said biologically active agent is heparin and which is present in

an amount of 5 to 30 weight percent, calculated on the air dried xerogel.

12. (Previously presented) A method for the preparation of a composition of claim 8, comprising

a) hydrolysing an alkoxysilane and an organomodified alkoxysilane in the presence of a catalyst,

b) optionally adjusting the pH to a value suitable for the biologically active agent,

c) adding the biologically active agent,

d) allowing the hydroxysilane to polymerize, and optionally

e) removing water and alcohol formed in the hydrolyzation from the mixture.

13. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12, wherein the alkoxysilane is a tetraalkoxysilane.

14. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12, wherein the organomodified alkoxysilane is an alkylsubstituted alkoxysilane.

15. (Previously presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said alkylsubstituted alkoxysilane is at least one member of the group

consisting of methyltriethoxysilane (METES), dimethyldiethoxysilane (DMDES) and ethyltriethoxysilane (ETES).

16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12, wherein nitric acid or acetic acid is used as a catalyst.